



**DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling**

**For Your Information...**

# Celebrate Earth Day...Everyday!

## What is Earth Day?

Earth Day is a day when millions of people across the world come together to promote a cleaner, safer environment. Earth Day is held every year on April 22.

## The History of Earth Day

Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin is considered the "founder" of Earth Day. Nelson's idea evolved over a seven-year period beginning in 1962 and resulted in the first Earth Day being held on April 22, 1970. The first Earth Day drew together more than 20 million Americans and became the largest grassroots demonstration in U.S. history. Participants took to the streets, lobbied Congress and began the modern environmental movement. Earth Day 1970 helped develop public support that led to the enactment of the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammal Protection Act as well as the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The rest is history. In 1990, some 70 million Americans took part in 40,000 Earth Day events across the nation with more than 1.8 million people gathering in New York City and another 800,000 in Washington, D.C. In 2000, more than a half billion people around the world celebrated the 30th anniversary of Earth Day, making it the largest environmental event in history.

Earth Day is now an annual celebration in many communities with events being held throughout April.

*"The objective was to organize a national demonstration of concern for the environment so large that it would shake up the political establishment and force this issue onto the national agenda. It was a gamble, but it worked."*

**- Senator Gaylord Nelson, founder of Earth Day**



*"That Earth Day has survived as an annual, international event is a heartening testament to the strength of a good idea."*

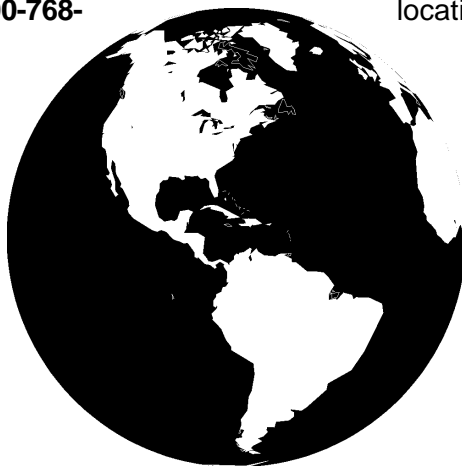
**- Denis Hayes, Chair, Earth Day Network**

## Things You Can Do to Celebrate Earth Day

- Reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Conserve energy.
- Conserve water.
- Carpool, bike, walk and ride the bus.
- Buy items made from recycled materials.
- Use a cloth bag when you go shopping.
- Learn about endangered species.
- Think about pollution solutions.
- Keep cars well tuned and maintained.
- Compost food and yard waste.
- Keep storm drains free of trash.
- Put litter in its place.
- Water your lawn only when it needs it.
- Dispose of hazardous substances properly.
- Wrap gifts in the Sunday comics.
- Learn about earth-friendly products and materials.

# 10 Ways to Celebrate Earth Day at School

- 1. Put on an environmental awareness fair.** Feature "hot" environmental concerns such as wildlife issues, global warming and energy use, forests, air and water pollution and smart growth.
- 2. Address a local or global environmental problem in class.** In small groups, have each group brainstorm and decide on an environmental issue to investigate. Have each group do research on the topic and report their findings to the class along with possible solutions.
- 3. Do an energy survey.** How much energy does your school use each month? Could they change to more energy efficient bulbs and turn lights off that aren't needed?
- 4. Get creative!** Have students write poetry, create art or develop dramatic presentations on environmental themes.
- 5. Expose your students to environmental issues.** Find out what Earth Day activities are taking place in your community. Invite a speaker to come and talk about environmental issues. For environmental speaker information call DHEC's Recycling Hot Line at **1-800-768-7348**.
- 6. Adopt a local park, stream, road or beach and clean it up.** To adopt a stream contact DHEC's Water Watch program at **(803) 898-4300**. To adopt a beach contact DHEC's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management at **(843) 744-5838**. To adopt a highway contact your local Keep America Beautiful affiliate.
- 7. Set up an organic garden at your school.** Make sure to have a compost pile for biodegradable items. When it turns to compost, use it in the garden.
- 8. Set up a recycling program.** If your school doesn't recycle, set up a program and collect paper, plastic and aluminum cans. If your school does recycle, try to add a new item to your recyclables list.
- 9. Create a community green map.** Your map should highlight all of the environmental assets in your community. Include things like local parks, farmers' markets, recycling centers, public transit stations, etc.
- 10. Imagine the future.** Have your class write an essay answering the question: "What might the environment be like on Earth Day 2025?" Create a bulletin board or other display of essays and artwork in your classroom or at a central location in your school.



**SOUTH CAROLINA**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL  
OFFICE OF SOLID WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING

**1-800-768-7348**  
[www.scdhec.net/recycle](http://www.scdhec.net/recycle)



For Earth Day information in South Carolina call DHEC's Recycling Hot Line at **1-800-768-7348**. For more Earth Day ideas go to [www.scdhec.net/earthday](http://www.scdhec.net/earthday) and see what Earth Day events are happening in South Carolina.

DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling FYIs provide general information on environmental topics. Readers are encouraged to reproduce this material. For more information about solid waste issues, please call **1-800-768-7348** or visit our Web site at [www.scdhec.net/recycle](http://www.scdhec.net/recycle). Please send written correspondence to: DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201.